

# **COMMITTEE OF LIAISON**

**with Families of Servicemen Detained in North Vietnam**

365 West 42nd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036

(212) 765-1490

## **CABLE ADDRESS:** **COLIAFAM**

### **Co-chairmen:**

Dave Dellinger  
Core Weiss

### **Treasurer:**

Mrs. Anne Bennett

### **Committee**

Richard J. Bennett  
Rennie Davis  
Modeline Duckles  
Prof. Richard Falk  
Rev. Richard Fernandez  
Norman Fruchter  
Maggie Gaddes  
Steve Halliwell  
Prof. Donald Kalish  
Stewart Macdon  
Prof. Ben Seitzman  
Prof. Franz Schurmann  
Ethel Taylor  
Barbara Webster  
Trudi Young

\*staff

May 4, 1970

**From:** Rev. Richard Fernandez

**To:** The families of the 335 presently confirmed prisoners held in North Vietnam

**Re:** Information on correspondence with prisoners

On April 20th I returned from a three-week trip to Laos and North Vietnam. In North Vietnam I spoke with officials responsible for communication between pilots held in detention there and their families here. The following information was emphasized to me by the North Vietnamese authorities and we are anxious to make sure that you are aware of it:

- 1) The Vietnamese recommend that families use the air-letter form (enclosed) for correspondence.
- 2) Communication to pilots should be limited to matters of family and health.
- 3) Pilots are allowed to receive one letter per month and one package every other month (not over six pounds in weight).

Detention Camp authorities have said that they do not wish to receive several letters and/or packages per month for a given pilot from different members of the same family. Families should make arrangements for alternating letters each month if different members

want to write.

The North Vietnamese authorities indicated that, from this point forward, they will not feel responsible for forwarding letters and packages that do not adhere to the above.

If the letter form is mailed directly it can go in another envelope but the mail route, "via Moscow, U.S.S.R.," should definitely be included in the address. If letters are sent to the Committee of Liaison for forwarding please enclose but do not affix stamps as we send letters on in packets. The Committee cannot forward packages for families.

While I was in Hanoi, Prof. Douglas Dowd of Cornell University and I met with three pilots: Cdr. Robert Schweitzer of Lemoore, California; Cdr. Walter Wilbur of Virginia Beach and Lt. Col. Edison Miller of Santa Ana, California. The three men were in good health, and said they had daily exercise and reading material. The three pilots advised us that they had been getting letters and packages from their

Richard Fernandez memo - page 2

families, and asked that packages include toilet articles and canned foods. In particular they mentioned soap, shaving cream (no razors or blades), toothpaste, powdered milk and cream, instant coffee and non-melting candy. They said they do not need clothes.

Also, in my discussions with the Vietnam Committee of Solidarity with the American People, the Committee of Liaison's contact in North Vietnam, we confirmed that since December over 300 letters have been sent from Hanoi through the Committee of Liaison. Of those, 156 letters are still on their way from Hanoi to families here.

We hope that this information clarifies some aspects of correspondence for you. If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact us.

NY 100-5833

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# COMMITTEE OF LIAISON

with Families of Servicemen Detained in North Vietnam

365 West 42nd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036

(212) 765-1470

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Prof. Ben Seitzman

Prof. Franz Schermann

Ethel Taylor

Barbara Webster

Trudi Young

\*staff

6.0.12.914.7

May 5

Dear Mrs. [REDACTED] b2c

Just wanted to let you know  
that we will be sending your  
letter on to your husband with  
a group that is going to Hanoi  
for a visit next week.

Sincerely,

Barbara Webster

## FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

Date 5/22/70

Mrs. [REDACTED] b7c

[REDACTED] Virginia, furnished the following information:

She is the wife of [REDACTED] b7c  
United States Navy, who was shot down over North Vietnam  
on [REDACTED] 1958. At first he was reported as being  
missing in action and five months later, the Department  
of the Navy notified her that he was a prisoner of war  
(POW).

During the latter part of 1969, CORA WEISS  
and ETHEL TAYLOR of the Women's Strike for Peace visited  
Hanoi and brought back with them a letter from her  
husband. They mailed it to her. She recalled receiving  
this on Christmas Eve of last year.

The day before that her husband was on a  
radio broadcast from Hanoi and the National Broadcasting  
Company notified her.

On April 15, 1970, her husband was again on a  
radio broadcast from Hanoi wishing her birthday greetings.

On April 19, 1970, Reverend RICHARD FERNANDEZ  
of the Committee of Liaison With Families of Servicemen  
Detained in North Vietnam (COLIFAM), telephoned her from  
San Francisco stating he had visited Hanoi with DOUGLAS  
F. DOWD, a professor in the Department of Economics  
Cornell University. FERNANDEZ talked with Mrs. [REDACTED] b7c  
for 35 minutes. He gave his Philadelphia telephone  
number as 214 - EV 7-4137.

She stated that during the conversation with  
FERNANDEZ, she made various notes. He told her that he  
had met with three POWs including her husband; [REDACTED] b7c  
husband of [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] California; and [REDACTED] husband  
of [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] California.

5/22/70

[REDACTED] Virginia

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SA [REDACTED] b7c

Date dictated

6/18/70

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FERNANDEZ related that they met in a large room where there were three tables and the prison commander was present. Two-thirds of the conversation was about the peace movement which was motivated more by the prisoners than by FERNANDEZ and DOWD. The three men were mentally alert. The men had read books by JAMES GARBIN and DR. SPOCK and the pilots were being educated with anti-war literature. FERNANDEZ told her that the prisoners hated the war and also mentioned reading literature like "I Protest". He said that 335 men were receiving mail. The men would be allowed to receive packages but they wanted no clothing. They did want grooming articles, canned food, candy, etc.

The men discussed their daily routine which included recreation, siestas, a doctor every morning and listening to Radio Hanoi. The men sent their love to their wives. FERNANDEZ said that her husband looked the best of the three and weighed about 200 pounds and he mentioned that he had not been injured. b7c

Under date of April 29, 1970, she received a letter from D. F. DOWD, Department of Economics, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. In the letter, DOWD stated that he had seen her husband along with FERNANDEZ, but was not aware of actually what FERNANDEZ had already told her.

After contacting a representative of the Department of the Navy, she telephoned DOWD. DOWD told her that the three prisoners that he and FERNANDEZ talked to were lively and friendly and wanted the war ended so they could get home. He mentioned that the meeting was in an administration building which appeared to be run down as Hanoi is spending so much money on the "tragic war".

Also in the conversation with DOWD which lasted for about ninety minutes, he mentioned that the meeting place was about a two-hour drive from the detention camp. He stated that the North Vietnamese never interrupted them and the men talked freely; however, they had all been advised they should not discuss the security of the prison or where the prison was located.

DOWD stated that the North Vietnamese official told him that in the air the men were considered enemies

but on the ground they were considered and treated as human beings. The North Vietnamese stated that these three particular prisoners had been cooperative, but that there were others who were dissident and consequently were not treated so well. The North Vietnamese spokesman stated they hoped the State Department and Lt. ROBERT FRISHMAN were "happy" for what they got. DOWD also stated that according to the North Vietnamese spokesman the Red Cross did not have to inspect the POW camps as Hanoi was accepting responsibility for protection of the prisoners. They also stated that the North Vietnamese people are programmed to hate policy makers but not the victims of the war.

In her conversation with FERNANDEZ and DOWD, neither of them discussed how the organization COLIFAM was organized.

She stated that she had been contacted by a NEIL WEDDERMAN (PH) of the House Internal Security Committee who asked her questions about her husband, but she has not been subpoenaed to testify before that Committee.

She related that she has no intention of dealing with anyone from COLIFAM and has no intention of cooperating with anyone having communist leanings.

She stated that in January, 1970, she received a two-page mimeographed "information sheet" from COLIFAM setting forth background, functions of the committee, clarification and "Who We Are".

Under date of May 4, 1970, she received a two-page mimeographed letter from Reverend RICHARD FERNANDEZ under the letterhead of the Committee addressed to "The Families of the 335 presently confirmed prisoners held in North Vietnam". The topic of the letter was "Information On Corresponding With Prisoners".

In addition, she received a letter dated April 20, 1970, under the letterhead of COLIFAM signed by STEVEN E. HALLIWELL. In the letter it was set forth that Reverend RICHARD FERNANDEZ had returned that day from a two-week trip to Laos and North Vietnam, and brought back "the enclosed letter along with 281 others from prisoners being held in North Vietnam". The letter also indicated that he held



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lengthy interviews with SCHWEITZER, MILLER and CRD WILBER. The letter also indicated "he also was advised by North Vietnamese authorities that families should write letters monthly on the enclosed air-letter forms". The letter transmitted several of these forms for the messages.

Mrs. [REDACTED] also added that under date of January 22, 1970, she received an invitation from CORA WEISS, a leader of the Women's Strike for Peace, to attend a press conference in Washington, D. C.; however, Mrs. [REDACTED] did not attend. b2c

E.O. 12812-2  
She stated that ever since learning that her husband was a POW, she has written a letter every month through the regular postal mail service to Hanoi. In addition, she has also written several other letters to her husband when the Navy has notified her that someone was going to Hanoi such as Mrs. TAYLOR, FERNANDEZ or a Quaker missionary.

She stated she has never corresponded with COLIFAM and has talked with no one person affiliated with them other than FERNANDEZ. b2c

Mrs. [REDACTED] related that she would be willing to testify to the above in a court of law.

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The June 16, 1970, issue of "The Virginian-Pilot," a daily newspaper published in Norfolk, Virginia, contained an eight page special section entitled "POW - MIA." Among other things, it contains the results of interviews with several POW wives in the Virginia Beach - Norfolk area as well as an article pertaining to COLIFAM. That article which is captioned, "A Chosen Few Tread a Productive Path" reads as follows: (TRUE COPY)

"NEW YORK - American antiwar activist Cora Weiss finds it easy to deal with the North Vietnamese.

She and self-proclaimed Communist David Dellinger are co-chairmen of the antiwar coalition known as the Committee of Liaison with Families of American Servicemen Detained in North Vietnam.

The committee has been chosen by the North Vietnamese government as a channel for information from American POWs to their families.

The diplomatic might of the United States hasn't been able to obtain similar information for the families.

Mrs. Weiss, 36, became an antiwar activist in 1961 when she formed the Women's Strike for Peace to oppose U. S. involvement in Vietnam.

Mrs. Weiss, a Jewish mother of three, is a housewife. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin with a degree in anthropology. She said she hasn't always been antiwar.

She added, "I've always had a sense of social commitment and believed in the idiocy of solving disagreements through war. But now, I think the United Nations is the proper place.

"The world is too small and technological advancements too frightening to rely on armed might," she said.



"Her husband is a lawyer. She said he fled from Nazi Germany to Austria before World War II. When Germany annexed Austria, she said he fled to the United States.

He joined the U. S. Army and later was an interrogator in the decartelization branch in Germany.

Mrs. Weiss denies that she is a Communist.

"I'm non-communist," she said. She and her committee have been denounced for Communist associations. She said, "When you don't have the facts you make hysterical charges."

She said she doesn't know that anyone in the committee is a Communist. "And I don't ask them," she added.

Mrs. Weiss said she wants the help of anyone to help the committee meet its antiwar and prisoner information goals.

An agreement for an exchange of information was worked out between the antiwar group and the North Vietnamese late last year.

On Jan. 15 the committee was officially formed. She said reaching the agreement was easy.

"I feel that there is no reason for them to not be free and easy (with us). And they have kept every part of the agreement since they made it. They never promised more than they produced.

"They seem to have made a decision that they wanted to go ahead in this area (of co-operation) and they did," Mrs. Weiss said.

"I'm very gratified that I have been able to play a tiny role in helping families find out (about husbands and fathers)," she said.

" \*We are very pleased to help. For example, I recently called someone in North Carolina. We'd just learned that the man of the house was a confirmed prisoner.

"When I called, the wife wasn't home and the child who answered the telephone was obviously a teen-ager. I told the child 'Your father is alive' and the two of us absolutely melted into tears.

"It certainly affects us as much as it does them. The point is there is a great deal of emotional involvement and a great deal of gratification. Of course there are going to be many disappointments.

"The most important thing to me, however, is that the men should be brought home. They know and I know that the only way that is going to happen is to end the war.

"So while we work hard to relay information, we are working increasingly harder at trying to put pressure on the American government to withdraw all troops from Southeast Asia.

"Then not only will the prisoners come home, but also the other 450,000 men in South Vietnam," Mrs. Weiss said.

Initial contact with the North Vietnamese was established late last year during the trial of Dellinger and the Chicago Eight. Defense lawyer William Kunstler went to Paris to meet with the North Vietnamese because Julius Hoffman federal judge, wouldn't let Dellinger leave the country.

Mrs. Weiss said that it was apparent to Kunstler that the North Vietnamese would like to channel information through an American antiwar group.

She and Mrs. Ethel Taylor of Philadelphia and Mrs. Madeline Duckles of Berkley, Calif., of the Women's Strike for Peace group, visited North Vietnam in December to establish procedures for releasing information and prisoners.

"Mrs. Weiss said the North Vietnamese won't negotiate the issue of POWs until the U. S. makes a decision to end the war; issues a statement of withdrawal of all troops; and agrees to allow a provisional coalition government in South Vietnam.

'Then, say the North Vietnamese, the issue of prisoners can be discussed as part of the over-all solution to the war.

Because the North Vietnamese, according to them, appreciate the anguish and suffering of families they couldn't wait for the U. S. to make that move.

'Therefore they are eager to have them (the families) communicate with their sons us,' Mrs. Weiss said.

While in North Vietnam, the three women talked with prisoners, visited the Hanoi Hilton (the name given Hanoi's showplace detention camp) and returned with mail from 138 prisoners, several who hadn't been heard from before.

Upon their return to the U. S., the Women's Strike for Peace, Clergy and Laymen Concerned about Vietnam, and American Friends Service Committee, joined forces.

Mrs. Weiss said the committee relies mostly on volunteer workers. She estimated that the budget for this year wouldn't exceed \$3,000. 'Probably less than that. It's a lot less than H. Ross Perot blew on his two trips that produced absolutely nothing.

'If Perot would put his billions behind efforts to end the war, that would be a much more impressive and effective way of putting his money and energy to work,' she said.

Perot is a Texas billionaire who supports the war and is working for release of POWs.

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"Her committee communicates with the North Vietnamese by telegraph to Hanoi. 'It just takes a day for a message to get to Hanoi and back,' she explained.

The contact in North Vietnam is a citizens group, the Vietnam Committee for Solidarity with the American People, which has the Communist government's blessing.

Mail is brought out whenever a member of the committee returns from North Vietnam.

Rev. Richard Fernandez, executive director of the Clergy and Laymen Concerned about Vietnam returned to the U. S. April 20 with 202 letters from American POWs.

He visited Laos, Cambodia, and North Vietnam with Professor Douglas Dowd of Cornell University and Professor Noam Chomsky of Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Rev. Fernandez said that his group was the first to obtain official U. S. sanction to visit North Vietnam.

Mrs. Weiss said she entered North Vietnam through Cambodia.

She described her visit to the Hanoi Hilton:

"I found a compound, a walled-in series of wardrooms made of concrete which means they should be fairly cool in the summer and probably damp in the winter.

"The compound was immaculately clean. The men (POWs) told us they participated in cleaning the yard area. There were a lot of shade trees.

"We saw their shower rooms and two dormitory bedrooms with eight to 10 men in each. The beds were made up with thin mattresses and mosquito netting.

"We saw laid out on beds decks of cards, a chess game and there were barbells for weight lifting," she said.

Asked about statements from U. S. officials that the Hanoi Hilton is just a showplace, Mrs. Weiss said, 'I'm not in a position to defend or deny other reports.'

She added, 'It is very curious that the San Francisco Examiner (Jan. 15, 1970) reported that the Army has put a gag on recently released GIs.'

The article, a United Press International dispatch from Saigon, reported that the Department of Defense had refused to permit recently released prisoners who weren't hostile to North Vietnam to talk to newsmen.

It pointed out that some of the previously freed POWs spoke highly of their treatment and captors. 'One said he could never fight them again,' according to the report.

Mrs. Weiss said she is skeptical of stories being told by two former POWs, Navy Lt. Robert Frishman and Seaman Douglas Hegdahl.

The pair have traveled throughout the U. S. telling about mistreatment by the North Vietnamese captors. In a press conference Sept. 2 at Bethesda, Md., Naval Hospital, Frishman said that Lt. Cmdr. Richard A. Stratton's fingernails were pulled out because he refused to appear before a press delegation and say he had received humane treatment.

Mrs. Weiss said journalists report that they haven't seen any evidence that Stratton has been tortured or that his fingernails were removed.

Mrs. Weiss said she thinks inflammatory remarks made by Frishman and Hegdahl are intended to influence the American people to hate the North Vietnamese.

'If you can't hate the enemy you can't effectively justify a war,' she said.

Mrs. Weiss and Rev. Fernandez said it is possible that more prisoners will be released before the war is ended.

They said the North Vietnamese were disappointed in the Frishman and Hegdahl stories of torture.

They said that is why others haven't already been released.

'There is a possibility,' Mrs. Weiss said. 'We (the committee) can't do something they (the North Vietnamese) don't want to do yet. They know we are here and waiting. After Frishman, they aren't in the mood to release more prisoners.'"



## FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

Date 6/30/70

Mrs. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Virginia advised that she is the wife of [REDACTED] United States Navy, who was declared missing in action (MIA) over North Vietnam on [REDACTED] 1967. She furnished the following information: b7c

On September 28, 1969, she accompanied several other women and went to Paris, France. These other women are [REDACTED] California, wife of a Prisoner of War (POW); [REDACTED] National League of Families of American Prisoners in Southeast Asia; [REDACTED] Los Angeles, California, wife of a MIA; [REDACTED] Maryland, wife of a MIA; [REDACTED] Virginia, wife of a MIA; and Mr. [REDACTED] Minnesota, father-in-law of a MIA Marine. There they spoke with three representatives of the North Vietnamese government. They took with them letters from POW and MIA families all over the United States. They met with them for three hours. The North Vietnamese told the group to return to the United States, join peace groups and await word from Hanoi concerning their husbands. Their intention in going to Paris was to create worldwide publicity of the POW - MIA situation in North Vietnam. b7c

She related that CORA WEISS of the Committee of Liaison with Families of Servicemen Detained in North Vietnam (COLIFAM), subsequently notified Mrs. [REDACTED] that her husband was dead. b7c

In October, 1969, RENNIE DAVIS and DAVID DELLINGER of COLIFAM were supposed to confer with the North Vietnamese Peace Delegation in Paris, France; however, Attorney WILLIAM KUNSTLER went instead of them. KUNSTLER conferred with the North Vietnamese about the POW situation.

Because Mrs. [REDACTED] is anxious to learn the fate of her husband, she went to Chicago, Illinois, in December, 1969, to talk with KUNSTLER. Her purpose was to determine if KUNSTLER, DELLINGER or DAVIS could make a personal appeal b7c

On 6/26/70 at [REDACTED] Virginia File # Norfolk 100-6833

by SA [REDACTED] Date dictated 6/29/70

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2

b7c  
to Hanoi to find out something about her husband. She went to dinner with KUNSTLER and LEONARD WINEGLASS, who were defending the Chicago Seven. Both KUNSTLER and WINEGLASS were sympathetic to her plea and KUNSTLER asked Mrs. [REDACTED] if she could visit the trial the following Monday morning. KUNSTLER enabled her to attend one day of the trial as a spectator. While there, she was introduced to all of the defendants including DAVIS and DELLINGER. She then met privately with DELLINGER for a few minutes downstairs from the court room. She stated that DELLINGER "put me off". She asked him if he could assist her in finding out something about her husband, but he appeared to be in a big hurry and was noncommittal.

She subsequently learned that CORA WEISS was going to visit Hanoi during Christmas, 1969, and she again talked with KUNSTLER at that time, but she does not remember the substance of the conversation.

C.O. 100-2-2  
On May 15, 1970, KUNSTLER called her. He told her that he was more concerned with her case than with anyone else's, meaning wives of POWs and MIAs. KUNSTLER stated that he was calling from New York as he had just stopped by COLIFAM headquarters. He stated that word had just come in from CHARLOTTE BUNCH WEEKS and JERRY SHIER of COLIFAM that her husband was not being held a prisoner in North Vietnam. These two women had been in Hanoi and met with a North Vietnamese official who requested them to take this message to COLIFAM to notify the next of kin.

b7c  
Mrs. [REDACTED] notified the Office of Naval Intelligence on the same date and they suggested that she obtain this information in writing. She then telephoned KUNSTLER who said he would write her the details, but he never did.

b7c  
On the same date, May 25, 1970, CORA WEISS called, probably in lieu of KUNSTLER. Mrs. [REDACTED] told her she wanted to know all details concerning her husband and particularly whether he was dead. She asked WEISS for a copy of the North Vietnamese message. WEISS subsequently

sent her the message which Mrs. [REDACTED] turned over to the Bureau of Naval Personnel (BUPERS). The message only reiterated what WEISS had told her and what KUNSTLER had told her. b7c

Mrs. [REDACTED] added that when she spoke with KUNSTLER the latter part of 1969, he mentioned that because DELLINGER had been on trial, DELLINGER was not equipped to handle information from Hanoi personally and that as a result a committee would have to be formed. KUNSTLER later told her that a newly formed committee was setting up an office in New York and she presumed that this was COLIFAM. He requested her assistance in contacting wives. She related that the Defense Department authorized her to do this, but KUNSTLER and COLIFAM did not pursue the matter. b7c

In regard to CORA WEISS, she stated that she had two previous telephone conversations with her. She said that in January, 1970, [REDACTED] had told her that WEISS had advised the wife of [REDACTED] that [REDACTED] was not a POW. She stated that [REDACTED] and her husband, [REDACTED] had been shot down together. She desired to know from WEISS whether or not the information concerning [REDACTED] also pertained to [REDACTED]. At that time WEISS said she would relay her message to Hanoi. Two days later, WEISS called Mrs. [REDACTED] and said that she had sent the message to Hanoi and that when she received a reply, she would notify Mrs. [REDACTED]. b7c

She further related that her mother-in-law, Mrs. [REDACTED] had [REDACTED] had Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and South Vietnam in the spring of 1970, in an effort to find out information concerning her son, [REDACTED]. She went there with several other wives of men missing in action. The wives learned during the trip that no relatives were in North Vietnam. Mrs. [REDACTED] went to the North Vietnamese embassy in Laos, where they told her they would send her request to Hanoi. She waited in Laos for two weeks, but only in vain as no answer was forthcoming. She then returned to the United States. b7c

Mrs. [REDACTED] stated that she has never personally met with Reverend RICHARD FERNANDEZ of COLIFAM and in fact has never spoken with him. b7c

E.O. 12812-2

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She added as a matter of interest that Reverend PAUL LINDSTROM, who has taken credit for the release of the Pueblo crewmen, went to Canada in November, 1969. He told her that he was directed to a church in Toronto, where he found an Air France flight bag. There was a list of 97 names in the bag and her husband's name was included as a POW. She stated that she did not place any credence in this because 81 names on the list were of men missing during the Korean War, all of whose statuses were changed to "killed in action". Reverend LINDSTROM told her that the people who made up the list were not communist.

*E.O. 12812-2*  
Mrs. [REDACTED] b7c stated that she has received an "Information Sheet" from COLIFAM containing captions of "background, function of the committee, clarification, who we are".

She also received the following correspondence:

A letter from COLIFAM dated January 21, 1970, addressed to her at her alternate residence, 37 Lincoln Hill, Quincy, Illinois, a reply to her inquiry to the Women's Strike for Peace about the status of her husband.

A letter from Women's Strike for Peace, January 21, 1970.

A copy of each of these two letters follows:



TWENTY SOUTH TWELFTH STREET

PHILADELPHIA, PA. 19107  
Telephone: 561-2636

January 21, 1970

Dear Mrs. [REDACTED]

I am sorry that it has taken me so long to write to you but I've been waiting until I could make definite suggestions to you and now I am pleased to say I can.

I regret very much that I did not bring back a letter for you but now an organization has been set up between the Peace Movement and Hanoi specifically for the purpose of forwarding mail and forwarding inquiries regarding prisoners from the immediate family.

The organization is the Committee of Liaison With Families of Servicemen Detained in North Vietnam and is located at 365 W. 42nd Street, New York City, N.Y., 10036.

I am a member of this Committee. Please do not hesitate to contact me for any reason.

Cordially,

*Ethel Taylor*

Mrs. William Taylor

1505 Ashford Way  
Phila., Pa., 19151  
MI 2-9078 (Area Code 215)

B. You will shortly receive information directly from the Committee of Liaison with details of its operation.



# COMMITTEE OF SON

with Families of Servicemen Detained in North Vietnam

365 West 42nd Street New York N.Y. 10036

(212) 765-1490

January 21, 1970

Co-chairman:  
Dave Dellinger  
Core Weiss

Treasurer:  
Mrs. Anne Bennett

Committee (in formation):

Rennie Davis  
Rev. Richard Fernandez  
\*Maggie Geddes  
\*Steve Halliwell  
Stewart Maccham  
Prof. Ben Seitzman  
Evel Taylor  
\*Barbara Webster  
\*Trudi Young  
\*staff

Dear Mrs. [REDACTED] b7c

We received your letter asking that we inquire from Hanoi about your husband [REDACTED] b7c. We have cabled Hanoi, and sent your letter to him along with the information you gave us so that the Vietnamese can confirm whether or not he is a prisoner.

I'll enclose a copy of our Information Sheet, which will help explain what we hope to do and why we are functioning as we are. We certainly hope we'll be able to send you good news concerning your husband, and will be in touch with you as soon as word comes from Hanoi. If your husband is a prisoner, we would expect to receive a letter from him to you, which we would of course immediately forward.

We understand your anguish, multiplied recently by the confusions of your past inquiries to individuals now associated with this Committee, and hope that word can come soon.

In hope of peace,

*Maggie Geddes*  
Maggie Geddes



NF 100-6833

*2/10/72*  
Mrs. [REDACTED] *b7c* stated that she would be willing to testify in a court of law.

## FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1

Date 7/2/70

~~REDACTED~~ Eastern Shore Chapel,  
~~REDACTED~~ Virginia Beach, Virginia, furnished  
 the following information:

In his parish, he deals with a number of wives of prisoners of war in North Vietnam. The chapel has formed various committees to render assistance in any way possible to these wives. b2c

One of the wives, possibly ~~REDACTED~~ had remarked that some of the other wives were becoming impatient about hearing from their husbands or learning of their statuses and that they might possibly join an irresponsible peace group. She told him that the wives certainly trust the United States Government in their activities about the POW situation but stress that many of the wives were most anxious to correspond with their husbands and learn more about them. Accordingly, ~~REDACTED~~ told Mrs. ~~REDACTED~~ that he would try to find out something about the peace movement. He accordingly called ~~REDACTED~~ Virginia, who is a staunch pacifist and vigorously opposed to the war in Vietnam. ~~REDACTED~~ asked ~~REDACTED~~ if he knew of any responsible person active in a peace group and ~~REDACTED~~ gave him the name and location of Reverend RICHARD FERNANDEZ. b2c

~~REDACTED~~ then called FERNANDEZ at a Pennsylvania number and possibly eventually reached him through CORA WEISS either in Pennsylvania or New York. He told FERNANDEZ that ~~REDACTED~~ had referred him to FERNANDEZ. FERNANDEZ advised ~~REDACTED~~ that he was planning to visit Hanoi concerning the prisoners of war (POW). ~~REDACTED~~ suggested to FERNANDEZ that he might try to obtain information about certain men apparently known to be POWs who had not written. b2c

~~REDACTED~~ also suggested to FERNANDEZ that he might visit Virginia Beach and talk with a number of wives of POWs and men missing in action (MIA). He said that he would fly to Virginia Beach at his own expense.

On 6/30/70 at ~~REDACTED~~ 175 - Virginia File # Norfolk 100-6833

by SA ~~REDACTED~~ Date dictated 7/1/70

MF 100-6823

2

[redacted] invited several of the wives, but [redacted] could not recall their names. FERNANDEZ flew to [redacted] sometime in March of 1970 and he [redacted] these wives along with [redacted] at Mrs. [redacted] home. b7c

He recalled that all of the wives present, approximately six in number, furnished FERNANDEZ details concerning their husbands, some gave him photographs, and all gave him mail to deliver to their husbands.

He recalled that FERNANDEZ said that he belonged to some Committee, but BUFFEY said that he could absolutely not recall the name of the Committee at this time. He discussed in general the functions of the Committee but BUFFEY stated that again he could not recall any details but perhaps thought FERNANDEZ said that the Committee might be instrumental in getting mail to and from the husbands. b7c

He related that he has had no further contact with FERNANDEZ, but during the limited time he was with him, he gained the impression that FERNANDEZ was a pacifist and obviously opposed to the war in Vietnam.

[redacted] stated that a Mrs. or Miss [redacted] b7c  
[redacted] had told him that she was interested in learning the status of [redacted] who was MIA in North Vietnam. As a result of this inquiry, BUFFEY later called COLA WEISS whom he knew to be associated with the same Committee as FERNANDEZ. WEISS told him that FERNANDEZ had already left for Hanoi and that she would attempt to relay a message to FERNANDEZ to try and find out something about [redacted] b7c

During the conversation, WEISS wanted to know why Mrs. [redacted] and Mrs. [redacted] wives of POWs, have refused to accept mail from the Committee. She said that the Committee had mailed them letters

MF 100-5833

1

*E.O. 12812-2*  
from their husbands, but they had refused them. She told him that she would place these letters in plain envelopes and send them to the two women. WEISS stated she could not understand why these two women suspect WEISS and others on the Committee of being Communists.

DUFFEY apologized for his being unable to furnish further detailed information concerning FERNANDEZ and his Committee and recalled that while the gathering was taking place at Mrs. [REDACTED] residence, he had left her house on several occasions. *b7c*

*b7c*  
DUFFEY stated, however, that if necessary, he would be willing to testify to the above in a court of law.

FBI

Date: 7/8/70

Transmit the following in \_\_\_\_\_

(Type in plaintext or code)

Via AIRTEL \_\_\_\_\_

(Priority)

TO : DIRECTOR, FBI (100-457899)  
 FROM : SAC, MINNEAPOLIS (100-15134) (P)  
 SUBJECT: COMMITTEE OF LIAISON WITH FAMILIES  
 OF SERVICEMEN DETAINED IN NORTH VIETNAM  
 (COLIFAM)  
 IS - MISCELLANEOUS  
 REGISTRATION ACT

OO: NEW YORK

345,570  
 ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
 HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
 DATE 7/29/93 BY 9103  
 POW/MIA Special EO 12812

For the information of WFO, Mrs. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Minn., was interviewed on  
 6/11/70 concerning her knowledge of COLIFAM. Mrs. [REDACTED] is the  
 wife of [REDACTED] USAF, who has been a prisoner  
 of war in North Vietnam since his aircraft was shot down on  
 6/8. The [REDACTED] family has heard nothing of/or from [REDACTED]  
 since 68.

Mrs. [REDACTED] is [REDACTED]  
 National League of Families of American Prisoners in Southeast  
 Asia and is a person who has had contact with other wives of  
 men missing in action or held prisoners by the North Vietnamese  
 Government. Among other things, Mrs. [REDACTED] made available a  
 xerox copy of a letter dated 4/20/70 from CORA WEISS, co-chairman  
 of COLIFAM, which letter enclosed two letter forms which were  
 to be utilized by Mrs. [REDACTED] when corresponding with her captive  
 husband. Mrs. [REDACTED] also made available xerox copies of this  
 letter form which is to be used by her when corresponding with  
 her husband.

2 - Bureau  
 1 - New York (100-168469) (INFO)  
 2 - WFO  
 2 - Minneapolis

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
 HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
 EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN  
 OTHERWISE

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Agent in Charge

Sent \_\_\_\_\_

M

Per \_\_\_\_\_

70F 12 1810



MP 100-15134

The Department recently instructed that Mrs. [REDACTED] be recontacted for the purpose of obtaining the originals of the above documents and preserving same for future evidentiary purposes. b7c

E.O. 12812-2  
b7c  
Mrs. [REDACTED] was recontacted on 7/7/70 at which time she stated that the April 20, 1970 letter from CORA WEISS was furnished to USAF Intelligence in Washington, D. C., and that this agency presently has this document in its possession. Further, one of the original letter forms was used by Mrs. [REDACTED] recently in corresponding with her husband, and she is presently attempting to locate the other letter form, and if successful in locating same, will make it available to the Minneapolis Office. b7c

Information concerning the recontact with Mrs. [REDACTED] will appear in the forthcoming LHM to be submitted by Minneapolis which will contain interviews of other relatives of men missing in action or held prisoners of war in North Vietnam.

WFO is requested, through liaison with USAF Intelligence, to locate the 4/20/70 letter from CORA WEISS; obtain same and preserve the document for future evidentiary purposes.



FBI

Date: 7/6/70

Transmit the following in \_\_\_\_\_

(Type in plaintext or code)

AIRTEL

Via \_\_\_\_\_

(Priority)

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (100-457899)

FROM: SAC, ALEXANDRIA (100-373) -RUC-

COMMITTEE OF LIAISON WITH FAMILIES OF  
SERVICEMEN DETAINED IN NORTH VIETNAM

(COLIAFAM)

IS - MISC

REGISTRATION ACT

(OO:NY)

345,570 Prof/MSA Special. EO 12812  
ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 7/29/93 BY 7103Re New York airtel to the Bureau, 6/9/70,  
San Diego report of SA [REDACTED] 6/9/70, and  
WFO airtel to the Bureau, 6/11/70.Enclosed herewith for the Bureau are two  
copies each of FD-302s reflecting interviews with  
[REDACTED] Va., and  
Mrs. [REDACTED] Va. Nine copies  
are enclosed for New York and one copy each for WFO.

Indices negative re [REDACTED] and

There is no organized activity of COLIAFAM  
in the Northern Virginia area. Logical security informants  
have furnished no information regarding COLIAFAM. Both  
individuals interviewed are advised the investigation

- 2 - Bureau (Enc. 1)
- 2 - New York (Enc. 18) (100-168469) (RM)
- 1 - WFO (Info) (Enc. 2) (100-50739)
- 1 - Alexandria

16 JUL 9 1970

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Sent \_\_\_\_\_

M

Per \_\_\_\_\_

AK 100-373

was being conducted at the request of Mr. J. WALTER YEAGLEY, Assistant Attorney General. Both individuals indicated that they would cooperate should their testimony be needed at any future date.

No leads are being set forth in the Alexandria Office but it is being left to the discretion of the office of origin in view of possible earlier leads which may have been set forth to interview names furnished by Commander BOROUGHS.

Commander BOROUGHS has advised that his identity need not be concealed as a source of the information furnished in this case.

June 26, 1970

Mrs. [redacted] Virginia, advised that she belongs to the National League of Families of American Prisoners of War and Missing in Action in Southeast Asia. She stated [redacted] of this group is Mrs. [redacted] with [redacted] offices at [redacted] b2c

Mrs. [redacted] advised that she has had no direct contact with the Committee of Liaison with Families of Servicemen Detained in North Vietnam other than the attached three self-explanatory letters dated January 27, February 3, and March 9, 1970, from Maggie Gaddes and Barbara Webster. These letters were in response to an inquiry made by Mrs. [redacted] as to the status of her husband, [redacted] who is missing in action. b2c  
Mrs. [redacted] advised she has had a personal interview with STEWART MEACHAM of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Mrs. [redacted] mentioned that she and three other wives visited MEACHAM at his office at 160 North 15th Street in Philadelphia during the first week of March, 1970, in an effort to determine the status of her husband. She stated that MEACHAM was initially contacted by her at his Philadelphia residence and she requested an appointment. She recalls that he made the comment to the effect, "Don't judge us harshly. We're criticized and we don't have to do what we are doing. We're trying to help you in your efforts to locate your husband." She stated that MEACHAM mentioned that there were about 320 letters coming through from North Vietnam and they would forward them at their first opportunity. [redacted] stated that she had originally gotten MEACHAM's name from Commander ROBERT S. BOROUGHS of the Naval Intelligence Command in Alexandria, Virginia. b2c

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

6/19/70

Virginia

Alexandria 100-373

New York 100-168469

SA

and

6/27/70

U.S. AIR FORCE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016

January 27, 1970 0171 365-1492

Dear Sir:

Ethel Taylor, a member of our newly-formed Committee, which will facilitate communication between American Servicemen held in North Vietnam and their families, has asked us to contact you. We are enclosing an Information Sheet describing the Committee of Liaison.

Committee (in function):

- Rennie Davis
- Rev. Richard G. ...
- McGuire ...
- Steve Halliwell
- Thomas ...
- Paul ...
- Ethel Taylor
- Barbara Webster
- Trudi Young

We have also duplicated the enclosed letter form which you may wish to use in writing your relative. The North Vietnamese have said that prisoners can send and receive one letter per month and one package (not more than six pounds in weight) every other month. Note the address and mail route given in the Information Sheet.

If you would like us to try to find out if your relative is a prisoner in North Vietnam, send his full name, service number and any details you have on when and where he was shot down. We will then transmit the inquiry to the North Vietnamese and are hopeful of receiving a response to every request made.

It is important to understand that there undoubtedly were many pilots whose planes were shot down but whom the North Vietnamese could not rescue and that there are prisoners held by the Provisional Revolutionary Government in North Vietnam and by the Pathet Lao in Laos about whom we are not able to get information.

We understand your anguish is not knowing about your relative and we sincerely hope we can be of help in getting information about him for you.

Sincerely,  
*Barbara Webster*  
 Barbara Webster

P.S. We apologize for sending a mimeographed letter but wanted to get this word to you as quickly as possible.

February 3, 1970

Co-Chairman:  
 Rev. Richard Fernandez  
 "Haggie" Gaddis  
 "Steve" Hall  
 Stewart J. Brown  
 Ed. J. Schuman  
 Ethel Taylor  
 "Barbara" Niel  
 "Tudi" Young  
 "Staff"

We have forwarded the letter to your husband which you sent to our office. We feel a need, however, to ask for some clarification about it.

As you will see from the enclosed Information Sheet, the Committee of Liaison was established to help facilitate communication between men who are prisoners in North Vietnam and their families here. In that capacity, we forward letters from prisoners to their families and, when requested, from families to men who are prisoners. We also will make specific requests for information on behalf of families who do not know whether or not their relative is in fact a prisoner in North Vietnam. As the Sheet makes clear, the only men about whom we will be able to obtain information are servicemen who were shot down over North Vietnam.

Though you included information in your covering letter which accompanied the letter to your husband as to the date he was reported missing, you did not state where he was shot down. If, then, you would like the Committee to make a specific inquiry as to the status of your husband, we would like to ask that you write to us such information along with your request. We need to have that before we can proceed.

No doubt you've encountered with frustration and anguish over your husband's status on the part, and we apologize for that small addition on our part. We hope, however, that with even information we may indeed be able to help ease that anguish for you and your family.

Sincerely,

Haggie Gaddis



365 West 42nd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036

(212) 765-1450

COLLIER

Co-Chairman

David Bellin

John Weiss

March 9, 1970

Trustee

Mrs. Anne Bruce

Council (in formation)

Rena Davis

Rev. Richard Fernandez

Maggie Gaddis

Steve Haller II

Stuart Hecchem

Paul E. Seltzer

Fidel Taylor

John E. Kibler

Trudi Young

\*staff

[REDACTED]

Dear Mrs. [REDACTED]

We received your letter with the specific information you had written you needed if you wished us to inquire about your husband for you. We have cabled Miami for information about his status.

Herb may not come for a while, but we will of course be in touch with you as soon as it arrives.

In the meantime, if you would like to, it would be good for us to have your phone number so we could be immediately in touch with you.

Sincerely,

Maggie Gaddis  
Maggie Gaddis

P.S. We've also forwarded the letter you enclosed to your husband.



## FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date July 6, 1970

Commander ROBERT S. BOROUGHS, Naval Intelligence Command (Special Warfare and Prisoner of War Matters), 12th Floor, Hoffman Building, Alexandria, Virginia, advised that letters to and from prisoners of war and those missing in action have been extremely limited from the North Vietnamese officials to the next of kin, and it is his responsibility to attempt to have those next of kin in some type of communication with their loved ones.

Commander BOROUGHS explained that Rev. RICHARD FERNANDEZ appears to be the most prominent individual on the Committee of Liaison with Families of Servicemen Detained in North Vietnam (COLIAFAM). He stated that COLIAFAM was organized in the past six months; however, some of these individuals on the committee have been attempting for the past four or five years to apprise those loved ones of any information pertaining to prisoners of war or individuals missing in action. Commander BOROUGHS furnished the following list of persons whom he knows have had some direct contact with members of COLIAFAM. He stated that COLIAFAM headquarters are located at 365 West 42nd Street, New York, New York.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

Amex FO 12812 Special  
ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
2/29/83 BY 9803  
345 370

12812-2-67c

On 6/29/70 at Alexandria, Virginia File # Alexandria 100-373  
by SA [REDACTED] New York 100-168469  
Date dictated 6/30/70

Mrs. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED], Virginia

Mrs. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Virginia

Mrs. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Virginia

Mrs. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Virginia

Mrs. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] North Carolina

Mrs. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] New York

Mrs. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Pennsylvania

Mr. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Kansas [REDACTED]

Mrs. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Florida

Mrs. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Virginia

[REDACTED] (Parents)

[REDACTED] Illinois

E.O. 12812-2

b7c

b7c

b7c

b7c

b7c

FBI

Date: 7/10/70

Transmit the following in \_\_\_\_\_

(Type in plaintext or code)

Via AIRTEL

(Priority)

E.O. 12812-2

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI

FROM: SAC, PHOENIX (100-6958) (RUC)

COMMITTEE OF LIAISON WITH FAMILIES OF  
SERVICEMEN DETAINED IN NORTH VIETNAM  
(COLIFAM)  
IS - MISCELLANEOUS; REGISTRATION ACT

Re New York airtel to Bureau, 6/9/70, and  
Bureau airtel to New York, 6/28/70.

Enclosed for information of Jackson are  
copies of referenced Bureau airtel and letter of  
J. WALTER YEAGLEY, Assistant Attorney General, dated  
May 26, 1970.

The following investigation was conducted  
by SA [redacted] at Tucson, Arizona:

On 6/5/70, Mrs. [redacted] Records  
Section, Tucson Police Department, advised she has no  
record identifiable with Mrs. [redacted]

- 3 - Bureau R.M.
- 2 - Jackson (Enc. 2) (RM)
- 1 - Phoenix

345,570  
ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 7/20/93 BY [redacted]

EX-115  
REC N

100-457899-36

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  
DATE 7/15/90 BY [redacted]

44 JUL 22 1970

Special Agent in Charge

Sent

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Per

EX 100-6958

On 6/5/70, Mrs. [REDACTED] Identification Bureau, Pima County Sheriff's Office, advised she has no record identifiable with Mrs. [REDACTED] b2c

On 6/5/70, Mrs. [REDACTED] Credit Bureau Services, Tucson, advised she has no credit record identifiable with Mrs. [REDACTED]

On 6/11/70 and on 6/19/70, attempts were made to contact Mrs. [REDACTED] with negative results. b2c

On 7/1/70, [REDACTED] Investigator, OSI, Davis Monthan Air Force Base, advised he is acquainted with many of the wives of prisoners of war in North Vietnam, who live in Tucson, but he is not acquainted with Mrs. [REDACTED]

On 7/1/70, Mrs. [REDACTED] Postal Inspectors Office, advised she has a forwarding address for Mrs. [REDACTED] dated 6/6/68, showing her forwarding address as [REDACTED] Mississippi. b2c

LEAD

JACKSON DIVISION

AT [REDACTED] MISSISSIPPI b2c

Will contact and interview Mrs. [REDACTED] In accordance with the instructions of J. WALTER YEAGLEY, Assistant Attorney General, Internal Security Division, as outlined in enclosed communication of 5/26/70.